heard it for the first time, I instantly caught fire. When a brilliant novelist assumes the unaccustomed role of a historian it is inevitable that he should now and again forget that he is no longer writing fiction, but that he is engaged on a literary enterprise where narration is limited in its scope by the rigid bounds of fact. Had he taken the trouble to read the documents which were in the possession of the War Office and therefore available to him, he would have known, first, that the Nivelle plan had been revealed to me by 25th December, and actually discussed at a War Cabinet on the 26th December, a week before I started *My opposition* for Rome. In the second place he would to *Motile plan* have known that at the Rome Conference I expressed my doubt about the success of an offensive in France, and suggested an alternative field for operations, and that this alternative had been opposed, as both the British and French military staffs, who were intent on an offensive operation on the French Front, had accepted the general outline of the Nivelle scheme. The precis of the debate on that subject which I have already quoted, amply bears out this statement. And thirdly, he would have known that at the Paris Station I declined to discuss the plan with General Nivelle in the absence of Sir Douglas Haig. That also is officially recorded. Three fundamental inaccuracies

in a single sentence are not a bad achievement even for a writer who has won fame by inventing his facts. The real explanation is that Mr. Buchan found it so much less trouble to repeat War Office gossip than to read War Office documents.

And now to revert to the Conference of the 26th to 28th December, at which we had our first discussions on the Nivelle plan.